8 March 2013 - The Met Office reveals which European countries were the windiest during 2012, in a special edition of Wind Review for the wind energy industry.

The Wind Review's wind index shows that the windiest locations, compared against long-term average, were Iceland, the Baltic and Denmark. With Iceland and France experiencing the most significant variation compared with 2011. All 15 European regions reviewed experienced near average wind speeds, with +/- five per cent of the long-term average; however, there was variability within regions and against previous years.

Last year, the EU wind energy sector installed 11.6 gigawatts of capacity, representing 26 per cent of all new European power capacity installed in 2012. This brings Europe's total wind power capacity to 105.6 gigawatts, meeting seven per cent of Europe's electricity demand, an increase of 0.7 per cent from 2011*.

It is critical to the calculation of a site's long-term power yield projection, that periods of sustained lower and higher wind are taken into account. The Met Office Wind Review aims to address the concerns raised by the industry about the relatively low wind levels experienced throughout the UK and Europe, particularly the 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 winters, to help effectively prepare for the future.

As well as the wind index, Wind Review also details five site specific graphs that show the average wind speeds for certain sites, located within the wind index regions. The graphs, produced using the Met Office's site specific wind analysis tool, Virtual Met Mast™, compare the monthly average wind speeds during 2012 against the long-term average.

The 2012 Wind Review's site specific graphs reveal that many of these sites experienced near-average winds speeds, the main exception to this was Pamplona in Spain, which experienced wind speeds well above average, by over 20 per cent. The wind index shows that Iberia had below average wind speeds, quite the opposite of Pamplona. This can be attributed to local affects in Pamplona.

Businesses use Wind Review to assess whether a wind farm's under or over performance is due to wind resource or other factors, and to evaluate performance in context based on recent wind statistics.

***** Source: EWEA, February 2013

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